Religious Habits of Mind / Spiritual Practices

(Lifelong religious skills)

***Doctrine of Charity* 174-175**

The externals of the body which pertain to worship are:

1. Frequenting temples.
2. Listening to sermons.
3. Devoutly singing, and praying on the knees.
4. Partaking the Sacrament of the Supper.

And at home:

1. Prayer morning and evening, and at dinners and suppers.
2. Conversing with others about charity and faith, and about God, heaven, eternal life, and salvation. (And in the case of priests, preaching, and also private instruction.)
3. And with everyone, the instruction of children and servants in such matters.
4. Reading the Word, and books of instruction and of piety.

The externals of the mind which pertain to worship are:

1. Thought and meditation concerning God, and concerning heaven, eternal life, and salvation.
2. Reflection upon one's thoughts and intentions, as to whether they are evil or good, and that the evil are from the devil, and the good from God.
3. Aversion of one's mind from impious, obscene, and filthy language.
4. Besides thoughts, there are also affections which come to the sight and sense of a person.
5. Seeing the Lord
   1. See the Lord in the order of His creation
   2. Have a clear mental picture of the Lord that reflects the spiritual qualities that we know about Him
   3. Recognize the indicators that the Lord might use to alert them to give help to someone else
   4. Recognize and articulate the ways in which the Lord can guide and care for someone their age
   5. Identifying and appreciating the Lord’s blessings, the good in others, and the good that can come from bad things: attitude of gratitude
6. Ability to effectively turn to the Lord in prayer
7. Reading and reflecting on the Word daily with affection and understanding
   1. Have a habit of turning to the Word for guidance and comfort
   2. Explain the difference between the Word and good books for the church
   3. Read the Word with affection and recognize the feelings involved
8. Engage with affection in worship
   1. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy
   2. Frequent sacred spaces and make time for quiet reflection
   3. Lead classroom worship
9. Embrace marriage between one man and one wife as the precious jewel of human life and the repository of the Christian religion
   1. Understand the concept of chastity in marriage
   2. Appreciate the unique distinction of qualities between masculine and feminine
   3. Show respect for the opposite sex and for marriage
   4. Honoring children, family, procreation and marriage
   5. Resist pornography and wandering lust and choose chastity
10. Daily spiritual life skills
    1. Perspectives
       1. Be discerning without prejudice
       2. Not exclude people based on appearances
       3. See and apply the connection of the spiritual and natural worlds – where my ideas are coming from
       4. Recognize and use the ability to choose differently from the thoughts, feelings, actions, the environment first inclines them to
       5. Humility
       6. Distinguishing between guilt and shame
       7. Distinguish the difference between evil and sin
       8. Balance between independence and cooperation/collaboration
       9. Valuing and protecting innocence – their own and others
       10. Appropriate caring about what other people think
       11. Growing ability to separate what is their responsibility and what is the Lord’s responsibility
       12. Trust and courage
       13. Identifying and not crossing micro-boundaries
       14. Valuing freedom and learning to make good choices – we have options
       15. Commitment, perseverance, and faithfulness in relationships
       16. Understand that we are vessels who are responsible for the influences we receive
       17. Shun contempt for others and embrace the concept that everyone can change
       18. Forgiveness
       19. There is a marriage in everything and it’s all about balance
       20. Do not delight in violence – real or otherwise
    2. Actions
       1. Confidently speak out against disorderly behavior
       2. Listen to others with understanding and compassion
       3. Know the steps of repentance and know how to apply them
          1. Recognize and articulate the spiritual challenges/enemies/evils and false ideas that are significant in their present life.
          2. Self-examination
       4. Be able to apologize
       5. Appropriately expressing one’s emotions and thoughts
       6. Following rules
       7. Make life choices from the integrity of following the 10 Commandments
       8. Practice the principle that all religion is of life and that the life of religion is to do that which is good
          1. Value and delight in usefulness
       9. Living in the world but not being of the world
       10. Teach each other (peers and/or younger students)
       11. Benefactions – knowing appropriate ways to volunteer our services
       12. Difference between helping and cheating
11. Explain:
    1. who Swedenborg is and his place in our church’s history
    2. New Church theology
    3. Speak openly about the Lord in their conversations
    4. Tell stories about heaven
    5. Comfortably share some of their New Church ideas in a conversation at a public school cafeteria
12. Be able to place the main stories of scripture in a timeline